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632 procedures I could not discover. One of the members of the *ayuntamiento* automatically serves as mayor, the office rotating from one *barrio* to another each year.

In addition to the *ayuntamiento*, there are a secretary and a treasurer, both chosen by the *ayuntamiento;* a *síndico*, who is one of the members of the *ayuntamiento;* an elected judge and *suplente* and a secretary of the court.

[624] Certain other duties are performed by *comisionados*, that is, persons commissioned by the *ayuntamiento* or by the mayor. These include the 4 *barrio* chiefs and the 45 block chiefs. *Comisionados* may also be named for special duties in connection with fiestas or public works.

In addition to the above officials, there are other groups with special duties. The representative of the people, *representante del pueblo*, and two assistants are named by the town. The representative is confirmed in office by the Governor of the State and stays in office until deposed. His main duties are looking after the public lands. Finally, there is the *reserva*, headed by the *jefe de defensa*. The [625] *reserva* is a group of armed men, 11 in number, authorized by the State military authorities, [662] and, at the time of the study, headed by the real political boss of the town.

The nature of these offices will now be described in more detail.

Ayuntamiento.—Five *propietarios* and five *suplentes* make up the group, serving 2 years. Those from odd-numbered *barrios* are elected one year, those from even-numbered *barrios* the next year. Cheranástico was classed as an odd-numbered *barrio;* what is done now is not clear. One of the members of the group serves as mayor, the other as *síndico*. The remaining members participate in policy decisions and in the naming of certain officials. Otherwise they have few duties. The *suplentes* apparently sometimes participate in discussion, but they have no real function except in case of the death or absence of their *propietario*. Members of the *ayuntamiento* receive no pay. Normally they meet once a week to discuss municipal affairs.

Mayor or Presidente Municipal.—In years the odd-numbered *barrios* elect, if the mayor is to come from *barrio* I, the *síndico* comes from

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632 estimated that the project of merely replacing
621 the wooden aqueduct would cost between $2,500
312 and $3,000, and efforts were being made to get
653 the Federal Government to provide the money. Actually the job could have been done by an assessment little larger than that called for by the two main fiestas of the town, but such an idea had not occurred to anyone. This feeling that major improvements should be made by outside agencies is a common one in Mexico.

377 This attitude was somewhat reinforced by
632 the action of the Federal Government in ex-
653 tending a power line to the town and supplying
621 it with street lighting. In this case, it is true, the town was required to provide the posts for the power system. *Comisionados* were named who cut the posts and charred the ends under the direction of the *síndico*. However, this involved expenditure of labor rather than of money.

491 A number of road repair jobs are undertaken
632 from time to time. In 1940, in preparation for
621 the harvest, the community repaired part of the road toward Nahuatzen. A new entry into town was made which avoided the necessity of crossing a bridge over the southern *barranca*. The existing bridge was in bad repair, and replacement was thus postponed.

ELECTIONS

632 Elections in Cherán ostensibly follow regular
666 legal forms. Extensive and nearly complete
662 lists of voters are prepared by the municipal officials. Some 2 or 3 weeks before the election the mayor calls a town meeting to nominate candidates. The mayor asserted that everyone was invited in 1940 but that very few attended. Most of those, he insisted, had been rounded up by the police. Others felt that only the most influential people in town were invited. In either case, apparently only about 50 persons attended. As at the 1940 election *barrios* II and IV were to elect members of the *ayuntamiento*, two tickets were nominated. These tickets were forwarded to the State offices of the PRM (*Partido Revolucionario Mexicano*) in Morelia, and the second of the two tickets was approved as the official PRM ticket. This must have been an act of prestidigitation on the part of the State officials, for there was nothing to choose between the two tickets and the State

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632 officials could have had no basis for selection.
666 Actually, the *suplente* in *barrio* II was one of
662 the reactionary members of the community, leader of the aces. He was chosen solely to stop his constant criticism of the administration.

The election was held on December 1, 1940. In theory, the first Sunday of December is the usual day. A commission, named by the mayor 15 days before, conducted the elections. Two ballot boxes were placed at opposite ends of the *corredor* in front of the *municipio*, one for each *barrio*. Only 45 votes were cast in *barrio* II and only 25 in *barrio* IV. The result of the election was to select the official PRM ticket in *barrio* II and the "opposition" ticket in *barrio* IV.

The procedure resulted in the mayor for the succeeding year, the successful candidate for *barrio* II, being elected by the majority of the 45 votes cast in that *barrio*. The mayor-elect promptly got very drunk and paraded from saloon to saloon for 2 or 3 days, shouting, "*Yo y Avila Camacho*—I and Avila Camacho." (Camacho was about to be installed as President of the Republic.) Murmurs of protest about the new mayor began to be heard on every side, becoming louder and louder. By the end of the month rumors of violence at the installation of the new *ayuntamiento* on January 1 were heard on every side. Loudest to complain were those who had attended neither the nominating *junta* nor the elections.

On January 1 very few people attended the installation of the new officers. The new officials went at the head, the new mayor in the middle, on his right the new *síndico*, and on his left the judge. The mayor carried a *bandera*, a round disk with the national colors in three vertical stripes, while his two companions carried ribbons hanging down from the *bandera*. Behind the new officials came the *reserva*, then a relatively small group of males. At the rear came the band. The procession made a circuit about the plaza and streets of the central part of town. *Cohetes* were fired off as the procession started and at each corner where it changed direction.

On the return to the *municipio*, the new mayor made a speech, received with a scattering of handclaps. The *jefe político*, Moisés Valencia, made another speech, urging cooperation

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632 666 662 with the new officials and the betterment of the town. He stressed especially fixing up the plaza and planting trees. His remarks drew more handclaps than did those of the mayor. This concluded a remarkably tame and peaceful affair.

On the surface, all the rumors had come to nothing and an uninformed visitor might have thought the talk had been nothing else. But the mayor who was inducted at this ceremony was not the elected mayor. In fact, he had not even been a candidate. The same was true of the *suplente* for the *síndico*. Obviously, explanation is called for.

Actually, the matter was simple. The talk and complaints had resulted in action. Apparently no one, on sober thought, wanted the elected mayor. So the *ayuntamiento* picked out someone they thought would be satisfactory and installed him as mayor. The choice seemed actually an excellent one. The new mayor was one of the best-educated men in town, a sober, honest, and conscientious man, fairly prosperous but not rich. None of the investigators found any objection or any tendency to question the action. According to the retiring mayor, one man, an *Almazanista* (that is, a follower of Almazán, the defeated presidential candidate) with little following had raised some objections. But the retiring mayor pointed out that the objector had never bothered to come to the nominating *junta* or to vote, although the mayor had personally invited him to do so and had asked him to make a house-to-house visit to all his followers, urging their attendance. Legality was to be maintained, however, and the State authorities received proper election returns certifying the election of the men installed.

Did this represent corruption and the breakdown of democratic methods as would be the interpretation of legalistic minds deeply steeped in the proprieties of parliamentary procedure? None of the staff of the investigation in Cherán felt it was. The persons finally inducted into office were capable men. They seemed highly acceptable to the bulk of the population, whereas the duly elected candidates were not. Rather, it seems that a truly democratic result had been obtained for a people who are unfamiliar with and distrustful of parliamentary procedures.

632 Persons who are shocked at the procedures
662 at Cherán should seriously contemplate the
666 difficulties in carrying out a formal election
212 with written ballots with a population which is very largely illiterate. In this case economic limitations and lack of imagination prevented carrying out the system used in national elections where the candidates each select a color and separate ballots are printed in the different colors. The voter then asks for his ballot by color and drops it into the ballot box. Not secret, and lending itself to ballot box stuffing, the method is at least an attempt to deal with the problem of an illiterate electorate. In a town such as Cherán the method followed in the election described seems equally efficacious—as long as the officials are responsive to public opinion.

632 That unconventionalities are frequent in elec-
665 tions is further illustrated by the presidential
666 elections earlier in the same year. Many months before the election a group of Almazán followers organized and began an active campaign in the town. The followers of Camacho (the PRM group) remained inactive. At the end of 2 or 3 months a PRM delegation waited on the Almazán followers and pointed out that there had been no interference with their campaign but that nevertheless the bulk of the town favored Camacho. The facts were apparently indisputable, and when the PRM group stressed the fact that further campaigning could only result in creating divisions and dissensions in the town, the Almazán group ceased its campaign. At the election, Cherán cast a unanimous ballot for Camacho.

185 Two things of interest emerge from this
666 account. The first is the power of the argument against disunity in the community. Particularly in the Indian community, unity is prized almost above all else. Sophisticated in some ways as Cherán is, this argument is still one of the most potent that can be made. The second point of interest is the bearing this sequence of events has on interpretation of the national election returns in Mexico. What happened in Cherán probably happened in hundreds of other towns in Mexico and helps partly to explain the one-sided results usually reported in Mexican elections.

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beaters, *rebozos* or shawls, ponchos, small loaves of bread, and so forth, and giving these away to the bystanders.[1] This custom was not observed in 1948, although we were told that it had been carried on only the year before. Various reasons were given for these lapses. Some said that the people were tired of the old ways and did not want to bother. One possible explanation may rest on the fact that the priest had a large building program under way and the pueblo's new church was about half finished. It may be that the priest did not wish to divert money from his building program by allowing his parishoners to spend it on lavish holiday expenditures. It would seem likely that there would be less money for the church building program if the fiesta were elaborate, but the opposite argument is also plausible. As evidence of this we were told, a month before the fiesta, that the celebration would, "be like in the old times because they (i.e. the church officials) want to raise a lot of money for the church, and they are sure that if they don't have a good 'Corpus' like in the old days then they won't be able to make much money." This person indicated that it was unlikely that anyone would be very generous if he did not have a good time. Nonetheless, the other view evidently prevailed—at least in outward behavior.

As the time for the fiesta approached, many members of the community "played down" the holiday, perhaps to make the event, when it actually took place, seem that much better. It was also repeatedly said that the political upheaval which occurred a few weeks prior to the holiday—the duly elected mayor was ousted from office by the defeated candidate—had divided the town. The result of this was that several of the trade groups chose not to cooperate in "making" the holiday. Despite both the prior maximizing and minimizing of the approaching fiesta, there was plenty of noise and good fun during the holiday.

It was the mayor's band, a group of from fifteen to eighteen brass and woodwind players who were brought to Paracho especially for the occasion as the mayor's contribution to the fiesta, that provided the music for the Huanancha dances. These musicians came by bus from the pueblo of Ichan, one of the so-called "eleven pueblos" on the Morelia-Guadalajara highway, a distance of some eighteen miles from Paracho. It may be possible to infer from the prior anxiety about the success of the holiday, and from the fact that the dancers were asked to participate only three days before the holiday, that the mayor himself feared he would lose status if the fiesta were not at least in some ways as in the old days. This may be the reason that the presentation of the dance was continued, as one means of keeping the good will of the townspeople. This is purely in the realm of conjecture, however.

The dance of the Huanancha maidens is one of the two special dances performed traditionally in Paracho. It is performed on Corpus Christi, on the day

[1] René Barragán y Luis Arturo González Bonilla, "Vida Actual de los Tarascos," in Lucio Mendieta y Nuñez (ed.), *Los Tarascos: Monográfia histórica, etnográfica, y económica* (Mexico, 1940), p. 146. In 1940 the miniature objects were made and then were sold on the following day. "It is said that formerly they did not sell, but that they took them to the church and later threw them away." (Translated from the Spanish).